

Cyberchiefs

Autonomy and Authority in Online Tribes

MATHIEU O'NEIL

PLUTO PRESS
www.plutobooks.com



CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
-------------------------	----

Introduction	1
--------------	---

PART I

1. The Autonomy Imperative	9
Anarchism and the Global Network of Struggles	10
Self-realisation in the Digital Commons	14
Theories of Online Autonomy	17
The Internet Ideology and Informational Capitalism	20
Epistemic Tribal Projects	24
2. The Distribution of Charisma	29
Sticking It to the Virtual Man	29
Hacking Weber	34
Chiefs Without Authority	40
Distributed Production	43
Toadings in the Early Social Net	46
The Reputation Economy	48
3. The Tyranny of Structure	54
Power Laws	54
The Impact of Search	57
The Persistence of Archaic Force	60
Field Logic: Bourdieu	62
Gendering the Online Object	65
4. The Grammar of Justice	71
Criticality and Justification	71
Legal Autonomy and Sovereign Authority	74
Norm Enforcement: Netiquette and Wizocracy	80
Tracking Authority in Four Online Tribes	88

PART II

5. The Last Online Tribe: primitivism.com	93
<i>Project: Web 0.0</i>	93
<i>Authority: The One Inside</i>	96
<i>Conflict: The Bookchin Brouhaha</i>	98
Radical Dissent and the Net	103
6. The Primary War: dailykos.com	105
<i>Project: The Democratic Noise Machine</i>	106
<i>Authority: Drinking From a Fire Hose</i>	109
<i>Conflict: The Alegre Affair</i>	117
7. The Imperfect Committee: debian.org	129
<i>Project: The Universal Operating System</i>	130
<i>Authority: A Bazaar of Cathedrals</i>	133
<i>Conflict: The SL Saga</i>	139
8. The Great Sock Hunt: wikipedia.org	147
<i>Project: Expert Texpert Choking Smokers</i>	148
<i>Authority: The Cabal</i>	153
<i>Conflict: The Durova Dust-Up</i>	160
9. Online Tribal Bureaucracy	169
Organisation Without Domination	170
Costs and Benefits	176
The Role of Conflict	180
The Political Economy of Online Tribalism	184
<i>Notes</i>	191
<i>Index</i>	233